

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-10 Cancelled

2 Claim 11 (previously presented) The method according to claim 22 further comprising a step of administering to the patient an amount of IFN-alpha 5 that is effective to raise the level of IFN-alpha 5 in the patient.

3 Claim 12 (previously presented) A method according to claim 2, wherein the liver disease is chronic hepatitis C.

4 Claim 13 (previously presented) A method according to claim 2, wherein the patient has a liver disease that is cirrhosis of viral origin.

Claims 14 and 15 (cancelled)

5 Claim 16 (previously presented) A method according to claim 2, comprising administering to the patient a recombinant protein comprising said IFN-alpha 5.

6 Claim 17 (previously presented) A method according to claim 5, wherein said recombinant protein is prepared by cloning an expression vector in a procaryotic host organism.

7 Claim 18 (previously presented) A method according to claim 5, wherein said

recombinant protein is prepared by cloning an expression vector in *E. coli*.

Claim ⁸19 (previously presented) A method according to claim ⁵16, wherein said recombinant protein is prepared by cloning an expression vector in a eukaryotic host organism.

Claim ⁹20 (previously presented) A method according to claim ⁸19, wherein the eukaryotic host organism is *Solanum tuberosum*.

Claim 21 (cancelled)

| Claim ²22 (currently amended) A method comprising screening a patient suspected of having a liver disease of viral origin, said method comprising assaying liver cells of the patient for reduced levels of IFN-alpha 5.

Claim 23 to 28 (cancelled)

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-10 Cancelled

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Claim 11 (previously presented) The method according to claim ²2 further comprising a step of administering to the patient an amount of IFN-alpha 5 that is effective to raise the level of IFN-alpha 5 in the patient.

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Claim ~~12~~ (previously presented) A method according to claim ~~11~~, wherein the liver disease is chronic hepatitis C.

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Claim ~~13~~ (previously presented) A method according to claim ~~11~~, wherein the patient has a liver disease that is cirrhosis of viral origin.

Claims 14 and 15 (cancelled)

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Claim ~~16~~ (previously presented) A method according to claim ~~11~~, comprising administering to the patient a recombinant protein comprising said IFN-alpha 5.

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Claim ~~17~~ (previously presented) A method according to claim ~~16~~, wherein said recombinant protein is prepared by cloning an expression vector in a procaryotic host organism.

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Claim ~~18~~ (previously presented) A method according to claim ~~16~~, wherein said

recombinant protein is prepared by cloning an expression vector in *E. coli*.

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Claim ~~19~~ (previously presented) A method according to claim ~~16~~, wherein said recombinant protein is prepared by cloning an expression vector in a eukaryotic host organism.

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Claim ~~20~~ (previously presented) A method according to claim ~~19~~, wherein the eukaryotic host organism is *Solanum tuberosum*.

Claim 21 (cancelled)

Claim 22 (currently amended) A method comprising screening a patient suspected of having a liver disease of viral origin, said method comprising assaying liver cells of the patient for reduced levels of IFN-alpha 5.

Claim 23 to 28 (cancelled)